

ALL AT SEA;

OR,

A MORNING'S TROUBLES.

AN ORIGINAL COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

BY HARRY GREY FISKE,

GEORGE VANDENHOFF, JR., AND CHARLES L. BURNHAM.

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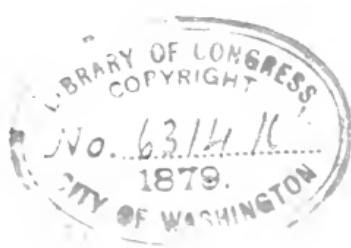
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COSTUMES.—**MAYNE:** undress naval uniform, white cap. **SOMERS:** dark morning dress. **GRILLS:** white waiter's jacket, duck trowsers, red vest, large collar and flowing tie, white linen shoes, red crop-wig. **MRS. SOMERS:** muslin morning dress. **ROSE LEIGH:** the same as **MRS. SOMERS.**

CHARACTERS.

LIEUT. HARRY MAYNE, U. S. N.	MR. JOHN SOMERS.
BRUTUS PIZARRO GRILLS.	MRS. SOMERS.
ROSE LEIGH.	

SCENE.—*Parlor of a Hotel; doors r. and l.*

GRILLS discovered dusting furniture.

GRILLS. Dust, dust, dust! And the more I dust, the more dust I make! A nice occupation this for a man of my talents and abilities. To think that I, instead of responding to the enthusiastic shouts and calls of appreciative multitudes at Niblo's, am compelled to trudge up flight after flight of stairs in answer to the ring of impatient and insatiable boarders, who little dream of the latent genius and histrionic talent which lie dormant in the breast of Brutus Pizarro Grills, the unappreciated man-of-all-work at the Atlantic Hotel. Two years ago last Fourth of July, I became, for the first time, aware of the heaven-given powers which slumbered in my manly bosom, and was inspired with a wild and unquenchable longing for dramatic laurels. To many managers have I offered my invaluable talents, at the very lowest, in fact, I may say, at "hard-pan" terms; but, alas! blind to their own interests, one and all condemned me unheard, and

as one can't live on water and air, I was compelled to accept employment of a sort far from congenial to my poetic nature. I have little time at present to indulge in flights of fancy, for the house is filled with guests whose wants are unceasing. Even to-day more arrivals are expected, but it seems that I have a few moments to myself. There's no one near, the coast is clear, and how can I better employ this unusual opportunity than by giving vent to my pent-up longings, and running over one of my favorite characters?

(With exaggerated action and emphasis.)

“ I am thy father's spirit,
 Doomed for a certain term to walk the night.
 But that I am forbid
 To tell the secret of my prison-house,
 I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
 And each particular hair to stand on end,
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love,
 List, list, oh, list !—”

VOICE (without). Grills !

GRILLS. 'Twas ever thus ! I must dissemble ! (a bell rings violently).

“ —I go, and it is done—
 The bell invites me. Hear it not,
 Duncan, for 'tis a knell
 That summons thee to heaven or to hell !” [Exit, R.

GRILLS (outside). This way, sir, this way ! That'll be all right.

Enter GRILLS with satchel, followed by LIEUT. MAYNE.

Your room is No. 65, sir. Shall I show you to it, sir ?

MAYNE. Not at present; you may take up my luggage.

GRILLS. That'll be all right, sir ! [Exit, L.

MAYNE. Well, here I am at Wells. How surprised Rose will be to see me. Strange that Mr. Somers' party should have left the city without telling me of their intended departure. I saw them not a week before they left, yet nothing of the sort was mentioned. That the subject was intentionally avoided I am quite certain. Could this have been Rose's own idea, or was it on account of a growing coldness I have recently noticed in her brother-in-law, Somers ? That Mrs. Somers likes me I know; that Rose has no aversion to me—I hope. How utterly I am in love with that girl, and in so short a time, too ! I, who have visited all quarters of the earth, and have seen the most beautiful women of every nation, and have been entirely indifferent to all their charms and fascinations, at last become a ready captive to a young girl fresh from school, and am prepared, at the slightest

encouragement from her, to strike my flag, and yield unconditional surrender. Luckily, having met an intimate friend of the family yesterday in the city, I learned that they were spending the season here—and, as a natural consequence, here I am. (*glancing at his watch.*) There is still some time before dinner; perhaps I may catch a glimpse of them. Ah! Fortune favors me, for, as I live, here comes Rose herself.

Enter Rose, R.

ROSE. Can it be possible! Lieutenant Mayne!

MAYNE. He and no other. Congratulate me, Miss Leigh, on having procured an extension of my furlough, which enables me to escape from the heat of the city for a few weeks.

ROSE. I do congratulate you most heartily. What a pleasant surprise your arrival will be to Kitty and Mr. Somers! But how came you to fix on such a quiet spot as this to spend the remainder of your leave of absence?

MAYNE. Can you not guess?

ROSE (*shyly*). How could I?

MAYNE. I learned yesterday that you were here, and that knowledge at once settled in my mind any hesitation that I might have had as to where I should go. You must know that—

Enter Grills, R.

GRILLS. Hem! Beg pardon, miss, Mr. and Mrs. Somers are waiting for you on the piazza.

ROSE. Ask them to step in here, please.

GRILLS. That'll be all right, miss. [Exit Grills, R.

ROSE (*confusedly*). You can't imagine how—how surprised they will be to see you, and—

MAYNE. I am sure I shall be charmed to meet them again.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Somers, R.

MRS. SOMERS. Ah! my dear Lieutenant! You dear, delightful man, how glad we all are to see you! When did you arrive? Why didn't you send word you were coming? How long do you intend to remain? Jack, Jack dear, here's the Lieutenant; don't you see the Lieutenant, Jack dear?

MAYNE (*advancing hand*). How are you, Somers?

SOMERS (*coldly*). How do you do, sir? (to Mrs. S.) My dear, I am going out for a smoke. Rose, can I speak with you a moment?

ROSE. Certainly.

[Exit Rose and Mr. S., R.

MAYNE. Your husband seems charmed to see me. The cordiality of his reception was quite marked.

MRS. SOMERS. You mustn't mind Jack's manner. You know at times he is quite brusque without meaning to give offence.

MAYNE. I am afraid, however, that it does mean something in the present instance, as I have for some time past noticed a coldness on Mr. Somers' part which occasionally approaches open dislike. I am all the more sorry for this as I can think of no way in which I have given him offence, and I confess I wish his friendship for very particular reasons. You must have seen, Mrs. Somers, that I have become strongly interested in your sister; in fact, I love her dearly. I have never hinted this to her, and am not at all sure that my feelings meet with a response. If, in this state of affairs, I incur the dislike of your husband, I most certainly do not benefit my cause. May I hope, my dear madame, that I still retain your good opinion, and that I can rely on your friendship to aid me with Rose?

Mrs. SOMERS. My dear Lieutenant, I am charmed, I am more than delighted. Though but a poor diplomatist, I feel quite sure I can help you. You certainly have my best wishes and heartiest sympathies.

MAYNE (*taking her hand*). I thank you, oh, so much! How good you are! I knew I could rely upon you, and now, with your valuable assistance (*enter Somers, R., unseen*) I must succeed. (*kisses her hand.*) I must leave you and arrange my toilet for dinner. Good-by for the present. [Exit, L.

SOMERS (*advancing*). What the devil has brought *him* here? Perhaps you kindly invited him?

Mrs. SOMERS. Why, my dear, what is the matter? I am not aware of ever having mentioned this place to the Lieutenant. Was both surprised and delighted to see him. But you seemed very cool; so much so that he remarked it. Surely you were not sorry to see him?

SOMERS. But I was. I do not like the fellow, and you know it, and, I really believe, are trying to annoy me. He is a conceited puppy, and if the women here are such idiots as I suspect they will be in his regard, by Heaven! my family shall not follow their pretty example, and you, madame, will kindly bear this in mind.

Mrs. SOMERS. Why, Jack, what is the matter? I don't understand you at all.

SOMERS. You don't wish to understand me! The fellow is a good-for-nothing dog, whose reputation, as you know, is none of the best.

Mrs. SOMERS. Why, Jack, you once told me you thought him agreeable, gentlemanly—

SOMERS (*interrupting*). Yes, that's the deuce of it, he's too confoundedly agreeable and gentlemanly! I can't imagine for what reason you evince such an interest in him!

Mrs. SOMERS (*confused*). Oh, I have no interest—I mean, no reason in the world. He's pleasant, and his society is agreeable to Rose.

SOMERS (*aside*). Trying to put it off on Rose. (*aloud*.) Well, my

dear, you know I dislike him, and you must not feel offended if I don't go into ecstasies over your naval exquisite.

MRS. SOMERS. Jack, you are greatly mistaken. Lieutenant Mayne is not the unprincipled fellow you would have us believe him, but a true, honorable gentleman, and you know it!

SOMERS. Mrs. S., I don't know it! and I wish you to understand, madame, I will not be spoken to in that manner. (*striding about.*)

MRS. SOMERS. I will speak, sir, just as I see fit, and if you don't like it—why, then you needn't.

SOMERS (*in a dignified tone*). Mrs. Somers, are you aware to whom you are addressing such language? I, ma'am, am your husband, and as such should command your respect and consideration.

Enter GRILLS, L., unseen, with duster.

MRS. SOMERS. When my husband is in his senses, and is capable of talking sanely, I should be pleased to see him. Till he arrives at such a desirable state of mind, I will leave him to his pleasant reflections and cogitations! [Flounces off, R.

GRILLS. Ha! Methinks I smell gore!

SOMERS. Who the devil are you?

GRILLS (*aside*). I must dissemble. (*aloud*.) I, sir, am Brutus Pizarro Grills, man-of-all-work. But that'll be all right, sir, that'll be all right. [Exit, L.

SOMERS. Here's a pretty arrangement. Just as I have got everything pleasantly fixed here, down comes this infernal fellow. My wife seems devilish interested in him. A dissipated, worthless dog, but with a great reputation among the women. That's always the way. Let a man be regarded as dangerous, and he becomes a lion among the ladies at once. What makes this affair still more unpleasant for me is, that I must leave here tomorrow on important business, which will detain me for several days, and Heaven only knows what may take place during my absence. If there were only some one here whom I could trust, and who would inform me of whatever may take place while I am away. Ha! the man-of-all-work who was just here! He will have ample opportunity to observe everything, and I can surely make it worth his while to be faithful to my interests. I'll try him. (*calling him, off L.*) Here, you, Pills, Squills, or whatever your name is.

Enter GRILLS, L.

GRILLS. Yes, sir. Grills, sir.

SOMERS (*mysteriously*). Grills, I have an offer to make you, which, if you accept it, will be greatly to your advantage, while at the same time you will aid me.

GRILLS (*aside*). Great Heavens! My fondest hopes are about to be realized, and I shall become famous. This is evidently

some manager, who, having heard of my extraordinary talents, has come here for the purpose of engaging me. I must dissemble. (*aloud.*) Sir, I am all ears.

SOMERS. Can you be discreet?

GRILLS. The grave is not more silent, more secure than I. Behold in me a modern Sphynx. I'm as deaf as a post and as dumb as an oyster when occasion requires. Name the task. Be it for weal or be it for woe, I am here to do your lordship's noble bidding.

SOMERS (*impatiently*). Enough of this rot! I need your assistance. Your duties will not be arduous, while your pay shall be generous. I must, of course, take you into my confidence. You saw the gentleman who left this room a few minutes since?

GRILLS. I did, sir.

SOMERS. Well, I dislike him, and firmly believe him to be my enemy, bent upon the destruction of my peace of mind. I wish only to be certain, then I will crush him as I would a snake. Do you understand me? Don't stand there like an animated wooden figure or a grinning ape! What I require of you is to watch him and my wife, and report to me any conversation between them you may by any means overhear. Can I rely upon you?

GRILLS. You can, sir. The combined tortures of the Inquisition would not wrest from me this awful secret.

SOMERS. Very well. Here is the first installment of your reward. (*holding out bank-notes.*) Be faithful, and you will not regret your bargain.

GRILLS. Ha! Ha!

"Shall we now contaminate our fingers
With base bribes, and sell the mighty space of our large honors
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?
I'd rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a—"

SOMERS (*interrupting*). Oh, very well. Since you have so many conscientious scruples in regard to taking the money, I will—

GRILLS. Yet stay! I will receive thy shekels; (*aside*) for I'm thundering hard up. (*takes bills from SOMERS.*) "Oh, what a fall of Grills was there, my countrymen!"

SOMERS. Have a care! If you betray me I shall readily find means to punish you. [Exit SOMERS, L.]

GRILLS. "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" But for the pressing wants of genius I had not stooped to such base uses. Yet the die is cast! The gold I gain from this old man will start me on the road to fame and fortune. What, do my eyes deceive me? As I live, there goes the base knave who I am to watch with the lady now, no doubt for a quiet stroll. Ha! Item first for the old gent. (*writing in note-book.*) Soon by my discoveries the damning chain of guilt will be complete. The

enraged husband enters upon the scene—insult—challenge—surgeon—pistols—husband victorious—vice crushed—forgiveness and happy reunion of mollified husband and erring wife! Quite good material for a five-act drama. With this dross which I will earn by my participation in this business, I shall be enabled to throw up the degrading situation I now occupy, and aided by that powerful ally gold, obtain an engagement at the Globe. Once given the opportunity, my transcendent genius must and will show itself, and Brutus Pizarro Grills will immediately become one of the brightest meteors among the many stars of the dramatic firmament. He will, by Jupiter! I must control myself, or the thought of the brilliant future before me will drive me crazy with delight. Ha! A footstep! The vulture approaches with his tender prey fast in his clutches. I must watch them. Where, oh, where is there a hiding-place? Behind this chair? No, it may be moved! Hold, under this table; from there I can observe all that passes.

“Why do I creep thus stealthily along,
With trembling steps? Am I not arm'd by Heaven
To execute it's mandate? And shall I falter now,
While every moment that he breathes may crush
Some life else happy?”

They're here. I must dissemble! (*gets under table.*)

Enter MRS. SOMERS and MAYNE, R.

MRS. SOMERS. We've had a charming stroll, have we not, Lieutenant?

MAYNE. Charming indeed, and all the pleasanter for me that I perceive you so heartily sympathize with all my hopes and plans. Ah! if I only might know that my love was returned, what an entirely happy man I should be.

GRILLS (*protruding head from under table, aside*). I wish they'd speak louder. He's talking of love. (*writing in note-book.*)

MRS. SOMERS. Well, my dear Lieutenant, why don't you seek an interview and ask the all-important question? I am sure you will not fail.

GRILLS. Item: (*writes*) she does not repulse him.

MAYNE. I wish to Heaven I could feel as sure. This, with me, is no mere idle fancy, but an overpowering passion, which affects the whole happiness of my life. Should my love not be returned—

MRS. SOMERS. But it is returned. Of that I am certain, though I suppose I ought not to tell you so.

GRILLS (*aside*). I should think she hadn't. His love returned! (*writing.*)

MAYNE. Mrs. Somers, you inspire me with fresh life and hope. But even if, as you say, I am beloved, your husband may object.

GRILLS (*aside*). I think likely he may!

MAYNE. If his opposition be strong—

GRILLS (*aside*). I'll swear it will!

MRS. SOMERS. Oh, never mind my husband! In some things he is a goose. I am bound up heart and soul in your plans, and if worse comes to worst, I would even connive at an elopement.

GRILLS (*aside*). Great Heavens! The plot thickens.

MRS. SOMERS. Now I must leave you, as I have something to do for Jack.

MAYNE. My most grateful thanks go with you. If possible, I will see her alone to-day.

MRS. SOMERS. Do so. You have my best wishes. *Au revoir.*

[*Exit* MRS. SOMERS, L.]

MAYNE. Yes, I will shake off this fear and hesitation that heretofore have overpowered me. I'll seek Rose at once, and learn my fate this very day. [Exit MAYNE, R.]

GRILLS (*coming from under table*). Ye gods! The old man's head is more level than I at first suspected. I have news indeed for him.

Enter SOMERS, L.

SOMERS. The more I think of this confounded business, the more annoyed I am. (*discovering Grills*). Ah! Grills! at your work.

GRILLS. Aye, sir, and at yours, too. "I can a tale unfold whose lightest word will harrow up thy soul—"

SOMERS. What, have you made a discovery already? What is it, man?

GRILLS. Calm yourself, and be prepared for the worst! Are your nerves braced to meet—

SOMERS. What in Heaven's name do you mean? If you possess an atom of brain—speak!

GRILLS. Sir, I almost fear—yet why shrink from the inevitable? Know, sir, that your suspicions, far from being unjust, were correct in every particular. He loves, and is loved!

SOMERS. Then you have seen Mayne and—

GRILLS. And your wife, and have listened to a conversation which will ever affect my trust in woman, my belief in man's honor.

SOMERS. Oh, hang your comments! I'm in no mood to listen to such trash. What have you heard or seen?

GRILLS. Your wife and Lieutenant Mayne came in after a walk which seemed to have been particularly pleasant to both. He was most devoted, pressed her hand, swore undying love, which she met with an affection equally as ardent, and after many expressions of regret at the cruel fate which separates them—planned an elopement.

SOMERS. You heard this?—and she—oh, my God! This is too much! Oh, Kitty, Kitty, I loved you so! Curse him for a

sneaking villain, his blood shall avenge this cruel wrong.
Curse him! Curse him!

[Exit SOMERS, L.]

GRILLS. By all the gods of love and war, I am undone. The old man is off his chump, and will surely do mischief, if not murder. What an ass I was, not to ask him for security! for now I may never be paid. But I will follow him, and perhaps yet secure "that which is but mine own." [Exit hastily, L.]

Enter ROSE and MAYNE, R. He hands her to chair. She sits.

ROSE. What a funny idea of yours to imagine I was making a secret of our intended departure from the city. I really intended to speak of it, but you so interested me with that exciting account of your adventures in the Chinese village, that I quite forgot everything else, and when I awoke to my immediate surroundings, I found it an awfully late hour, and so I sent you home.

MAYNE. No, indeed. If you remember, it was I that first made the discovery of the dreadful lateness of the hour by referring to my watch, and out of the generosity of my self-sacrificing nature, I went out into the darkness.

ROSE. Poor man! How great of you. Your sex is so proverbially selfish, that such an unusual instance of self-denial should be spread throughout the world.

MAYNE. Seriously, it did cost me an effort to go. But, Miss Leigh, I have sought this interview to speak on a subject which concerns my whole happiness. With you it rests to decide whether I leave here to-day a hopeless, aimless, miserable wretch, or remain here the happiest of mortals.

ROSE (*shyly*). Rests with me? I am sure I don't wish to do anything to make you unhappy.

MAYNE. Since the first time I met you, some few months ago, your image has been constantly before me. When absent from you, I have seemed only to exist—not to live; when with you, I have been in an atmosphere of almost perfect happiness, which I feared to disturb by speaking. Oh, Rose! can you not see I love you—love you with a passion that defies my most ardent attempts to express it? You have become my guide—my aspiration—my hope. Without you, life would be for me a blank, and I should care nothing for what the future might bring forth; with you by my side I can dare and do all things. You are silent! Can I have mistaken your feelings, and do you care nothing for me? Rose, my darling, can you love me?

ROSE (*impulsively*). Can I? Don't you know I do!

MAYNE (*embracing her*). My own love! Can it be possible that such happiness is mine, or shall I presently awake to find it only another of the delusive dreams that I have so often indulged in?

ROSE. Yes, Harry, it is quite real. If my love can make you happy, you have my whole heart. But are you sure that you love me so much?

MAYNE. Sure? Certain as that I breathe—a thousand times more than I can ever tell you. Only one thing now troubles me in the least. Your brother-in-law, for some reason which I can't guess, has evidently taken a violent dislike to me. Whether this is on account of my attentions to you or not, I can't say. At all events, he will not favor my suit, and as he is your guardian, that will be anything but pleasant.

ROSE. He certainly was not pleased with your coming here; that I noticed.

MAYNE. Perhaps Mr. Somers dislikes me because of my past life, which has, I frankly confess, been somewhat wild and reckless. But, darling, all this is a thing of the past. The future is in my own hands, and I know very soon, with your aid, I shall become a model man in every respect. At present, I am rather in the rough; but I am not, believe me, without possibilities, as you shall see.

ROSE. Don't imagine, dear, your past can ever mar my future happiness. I willingly forget and forgive any follies you may have committed, for I know you'll be true now.

MAYNE (*embraces her*). Thank you, darling; the world's vices and I have now nothing in common. I shall live but for you, my chief object your happiness.

Enter Mrs. Somers, L.

MRS. SOMERS. Oh, the brute! Oh, the vile, wicked monster! I hate him! oh, how I hate him! And he, the old villain, pretending to be jealous of *me*, who loved him so. "Twas only a cloak for his own wickedness. Oh! if I had her here I'd—I'd—

ROSE. } What is the matter?
MAYNE. }

ROSE. Dear Kitty, are you ill? Who is this brute, villain, monster, and everything else that is bad?

MAYNE. And who is "she?" Pray explain!

MRS. SOMERS. I'm a deceived, broken-hearted woman; but I won't stand it—I shall leave him and go—

ROSE. For Heaven's sake, sister, calm yourself, and tell us your trouble. Perhaps we can help you.

MRS. SOMERS. There can be no help. But there—the world will know it, so you might as well hear the first report. Ha, ha, ha! (*hysterically.*) Read the glaring proof of his infidelity, and then take me somewhere—anywhere away from him. I never want to see his wicked, deceitful face again. (*handing Rose letter.*)

ROSE. Listen, Harry; what can this mean? (*reading.*)

"DEAR JACK: Yours received. I have fulfilled your instructions to the letter. As you expected, I experienced a little difficulty. The old man evidently suspected something. I'm happy to say it's all O. K., and I must congratulate you for a

lucky dog. By Jove ! I'm in love with her myself. A trifle dark, but, ye gods, what style ! Shapely legs, and eyes that look right through you. But I'll spare you further rhapsodies. Run down to-morrow and see for yourself; you'll find her at 183 Charles Street. Drop in and see me during the day; I want to hear you *rave*. Truly yours, FRED.

"P. S.—She needs as much care as a baby. You must be tender in dealing with her, for she has lots of spirit. It is fortunate you've a long purse, for I fancy you'll find her an expensive luxury to keep. F."

MRS. SOMERS (*with forced calmness*). Well, what do you think of that for a specimen ? Ought I not to be proud of so noble, so virtuous a husband ?

MAYNE. Have you seen Mr. Somers ? Perhaps—

MRS. SOMERS. I tell you I never will see him again. I hate him !

ROSE. But why not show him the letter ? At least, give him a chance to defend himself.

MRS. SOMERS. I believe you sympathize with him. Every one is against me. I wish I were dead. (*sobbing*.)

ROSE. Dearest Kitty, how cruel you are ! I will never desert you.

Enter GRILLS, L.

GRILLS (*with bombast*). Pardon, my liege and ladies; my lord awaits without, and would fain a word with your ladyship.

MAYNE. What ?

GRILLS (*meekly*). Mr. Somers would like to see Mrs. Somers.

MRS. SOMERS. I won't go to him—I won't see him !

GRILLS (*aside*). Then Mahomet must come to the mountain.

ROSE (*aside to GRILLS*). Tell Mr. Somers to come here.

GRILLS (*aside*). Ha ! the seeds of dissension sown by my rude hand have taken root, and now I shall hang out my banner on the outer wall, cry, Havoc ! and let slip the dogs of war.

[*Exit, L.*

ROSE. Oh, Harry dear, do not quarrel with Mr. Somers. He is so vindictive, he'd never forgive you, and that would ruin all and break my heart. Conciliate him for my sake.

MAYNE. Trust to me, dearest. I never lose my temper.

Enter SOMERS, L., hurriedly followed by GRILLS.

SOMERS (*advancing*). I should much prefer, madame, to have seen you alone. I was, perhaps, more considerate of your feelings than the occasion warrants, but you have seen fit to oppose me even here. Know, then, that I have discovered *all*.

OMNES. All !

SOMERS. Yes, *all*. But you need not fear me. I shall not interfere in any way with you. I cast you off. Take what you choose,

and never let me set eyes on you again. I wish you much joy with your pretty lover.

MAYNE (*to Rose*). Her pretty lover?

MRS. SOMERS (*sarcastically*). Your delicious impudence is decidedly refreshing. The liberty you so kindly offer I had fully intended to take without your permission. You are a villain of the deepest dye, and if I were a man I would kill you.

ROSE. What mystery is this? What excuse can you offer for this base insult?

MR. SOMERS. Rose, my dear, forgive me if I seem hard, but I am half crazed. I have made a discovery. Your sister, my wife, has betrayed me, and my curse be upon her and that sneaking villain there.

MAYNE. By Heaven, sir, this is too much. *I*, her lover! Your age alone protects you. I am a man of honor, and you must explain yourself or take the consequences.

SOMERS. You are a consummate villain. My proof is here. *Grills!*

OMNES. Grills?

SOMERS. Yes, Grills. You little imagined, madame, that your loving interviews were overheard by one in my employ. You thought me an easily duped fool, whose love for you so blinded him that he could see no wrong in you. Know, then, that Grills, at my instigation, has watched you since that villain's arrival this morning. This faithful fellow overheard Mayne's confession of love for you, your kind reception of it, and finally your plan for an intended elopement. Can you deny this, traitress?

MRS. SOMERS (*starting and turning away*). You are as great a fool as villain, I suspect.

MAYNE. I much regret this unfortunate mistake, but I think I can set matters right. I *do* love, I admit, not your wife, but her sister, and she has made me happy by loving me in return. I recognized your evident aversion to me, and to insure success secured Mrs. Somers' co-operation, hoping through her to obtain your consent. Our conversation was upon that subject alone, and how that infernal idiot could have made such a blunder, I cannot conceive.

GRILLS (*aside*). It seems my vaulting ambition hath o'erleaped itself.

SOMERS. Heavens! How my infernal jealousy has mixed me! Confound Grills for a stupid fool!

GRILLS. Awhile ago I was a "faithful fellow;" now he curses me, and calls me a fool. Alack and well-a-day!

SOMERS. Mayne, I beg your pardon. My darling (*to Mrs. SOMERS*), can you forgive your jealous old hubby?

MRS. SOMERS. No! Never! Your insult and distrust of me were enough—but do you think I will be the weak dupe again I was! Forgive you, indeed! Then, *your* mind satisfied, you will

keep your engagement with that vile creature your kind friend has—

SOMERS. What, in Heaven's name—

MRS. SOMERS (*handing him letter*). There ! I found it where you had dropped it. You should be more careful of your tender correspondence. Do you recognize it?

SOMERS (*glancing at letter*). Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he ! My dear, we can cry quits—ha, ha !—for you have made as great a mistake as myself. This letter is from my old friend, Brown, and does not relate, as you suppose, to a woman, but to a fine, blooded mare that I desired him, if possible, to buy for me. I intended it as a present for you when you returned home; but since you so positively assert that you cannot forgive me— Oh, dearest, overlook your stupid old husband's absurd blunder, which was caused entirely by his excessive love for you, and let's be happy once more.

MRS. SOMERS (*throwing herself into his arms*). Oh, Jack ! How wretched I have been !

SOMERS. And I also; but, thank Heaven, the clouds of mystery and suspicion that enveloped us are dispelled, and I have been taught a good lesson as to the dangers of jealousy. Lieutenant, you say you love Rose and that she has promised to be your wife. All I can say as her guardian is—take her, with my best wishes for your happiness; but beware of jealousy.

MAYNE. A thousand thanks for your kindness, Mr. Somers; now we are indeed all happy.

GRILLS. Bless you, my children, bless you ! [Gong sounds.

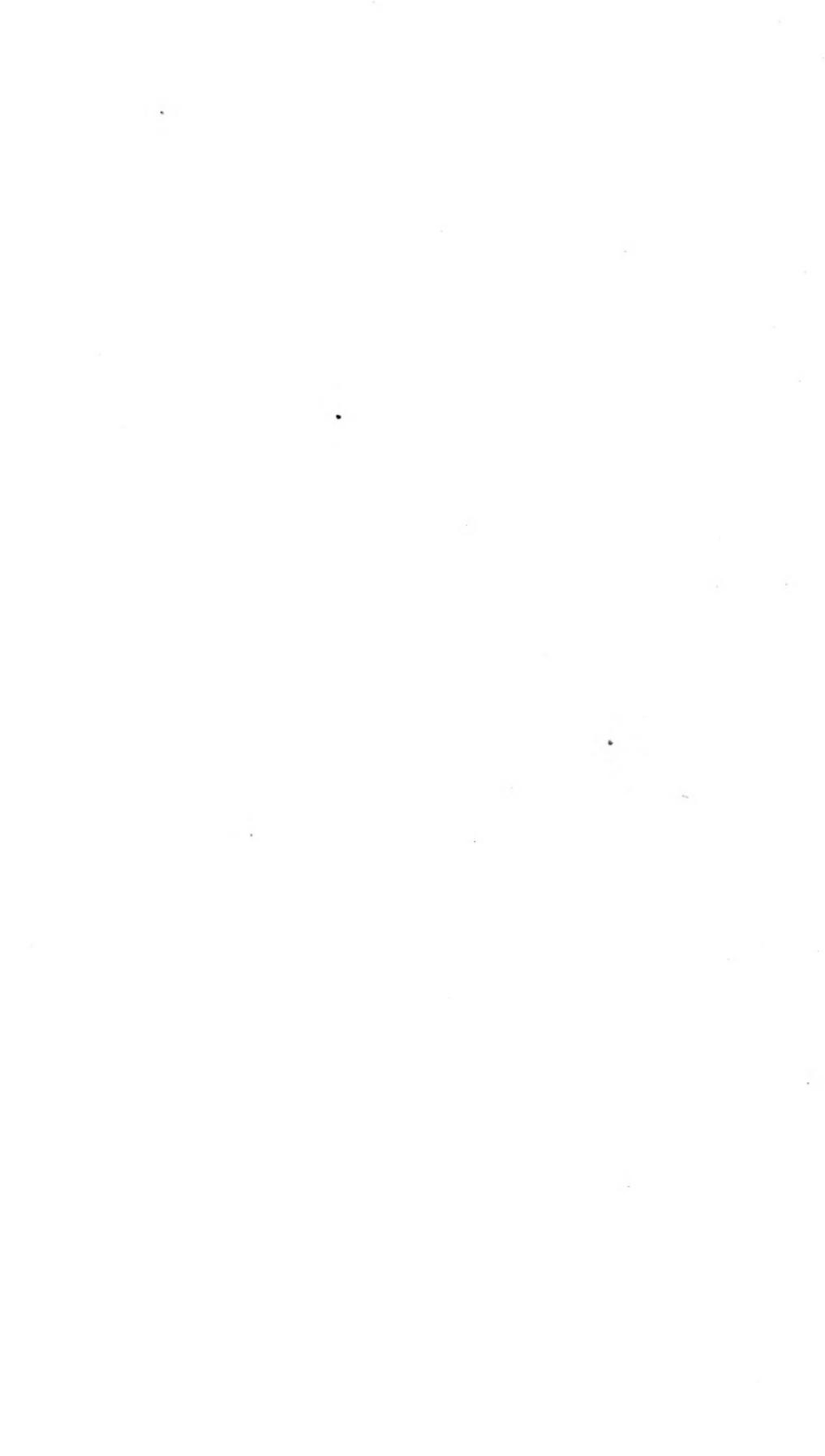
MAYNE. Dinner time already, and I confess the events of the morning have sharpened my appetite considerably. But before we go, let us thank our kind friends for their attention to the mistakes and dilemmas of our party, who throughout the morning have been "ALL AT SEA."

GRILLS (*looking at audience, then at MAYNE*). That'll be all right.

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